



↑ Students at Golfcrest Elementary in the Houston Independent School District examine a Mars meteorite during National Engineer’s Week. JSC’s Equal Opportunity Program Director Estella Hernandez Gillette said she is “always amazed at how enthusiastic the children are when I go talk to them.” Gillette was on of more than 225 professionals who visited classrooms in February during the nation event.

JSC Photo S97-01648

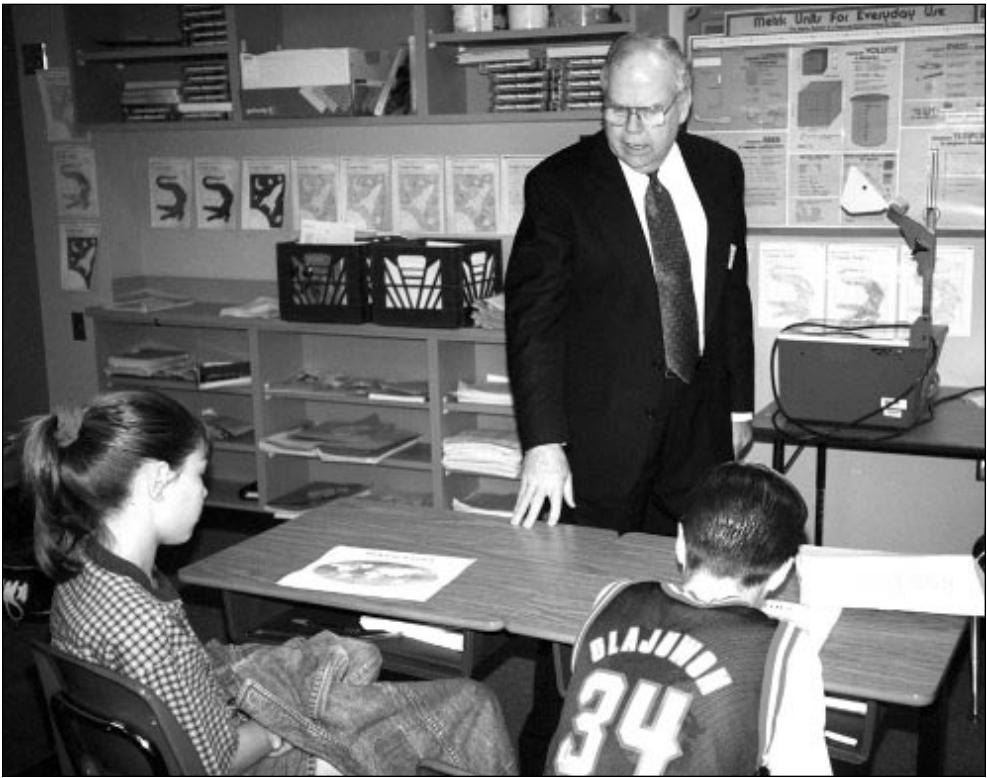
Cinda Chullen, technical manager for the Science, Engineering, Analysis and Test contract for the Engineering Directorate shows students at Rustic Oak Elementary how various components of space suits work.

JSC Photo S79-03240



Space Operations Director John O’Neill talks with students at Bales Intermediate in Friendswood Independent School District.

JSC Photo S79-03230



EOPO Director Estella Hernandez Gillette visits students in Ann Collum’s fifth grade class at Golfcrest Elementary School. Professionals from JSC visited more than 350 classrooms to encourage students to pursue careers in engineering, science and technology as part of a national outreach program called Discover “E” (“E” for Engineering) during National Engineers Week. JSC’s Education Outreach Program provides volunteers for schools in the local educational community throughout the year, and new volunteers are always needed. As a volunteer, employees can help educators reach students by participating as guest speakers, science fair judges, tutors, mentors and E-mail mentors. Time spent participating in an approved Education Outreach event is official duty time, and civil service employees may charge their volunteer time, up to 40 hours per calendar year, to a special education labor code. For more information about the Education Outreach Program, call x32929.

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Stimulating Science

JSC workers visit classrooms to share engineering wonders

Inspiring future technical professionals was the task of more than 225 JSC employees in February and response from students and teachers indicates they did their job.

“By the time I was done with my presentation, over half of the class told me that they wanted to be engineers too and several of them informed me they wanted to be aerospace engineers,” said Cinda Chullen, technical manager for the Science, Engineering, Analysis and Test contract for the Engineering Directorate about her visit to Ginny Royer’s gifted and talented class at Rustic Oak Elementary in the Pearland Independent School District. “This was a great experience and opportunity to see our youth so enthusiastic about engineering and the space program.”

Chullen, other JSC civil service and contractor employees, and JSC managers visited more than 350 classrooms to encourage students to pursue careers in engineering, science and technology as part of National Engineers Week. While the national program focuses on one week in February, JSC employees spent time with students during the entire month to give students exposure to the space program.

“Every once in a while, we have the opportunity to share our thoughts and ideas with the people who, in years to come, will be working in the technical and engineering fields,” said Jim Wade, an aerospace engineer in the International Space Station Independent Assessment Office. “I always enjoy going out to schools and talking to the kids about NASA and space. National Engineer’s Week provides a focus for NASA and the schools to do some build-up prior to the appearance, so the kids are generally more focused.”

Volunteers visited 117 schools in the Houston area and thank-you letters are pouring in from students and teachers.

“I have never seen the enthusiasm and comprehension among stu-

dents that your presentation accomplished,” wrote Kylene Barnes, a science teacher at Baker Junior High School, to Bill Foster of United Space Alliance. “The students gained so much knowledge through demonstrations, audio-visual and discussions.”

Students who wrote to Foster thought his demonstrations were “really cool” and expressed appreciation to him for taking time off from work to visit their class.

“The real reward comes from the feedback I get from teachers, parents and children,” Wade said. “Occasionally, a class will write thank you notes that eventually get forwarded to me. I’ll read each letter, and there are usually several cases per class where you can tell that the child has been inspired and has become interested in science, engineering, or space. In one instance, I visited several schools while on a family vacation to Minnesota. One of those classes did a class project on

space and won a science award and recognition by the state for their accomplishments. Their teacher sent me a copy of the news- h stated they were

their project by a engineer. I didn’t

need to have my name in print to know that my appearance had a

positive impact on a number of kids.” A majority of volunteers went to the classrooms equipped with science demonstrations, exhibits such as space food, Apollo lunar boots and gloves and videos about NASA and the space program. But more important, they brought real-life experiences and shared their unique space-related knowledge.

“I am always amazed at how enthusiastic the children are when I go talk to them, said Equal Opportunity Program Director Estella Gillette. “They are so curious about what we do. What I like most about speaking to the younger children is that they don’t question why NASA does what it does. They simply accept the fact that we are here and that what we do is ‘awesome,’ as one child said to me recently.” □



ENGINEERS
Turning Ideas
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NATIONAL ENGINEERS WEEK,
FEBRUARY 16-22, 1997

